Epaphras.

A SERMON PREACHED AT SAINT AUSTELL IN CORNWAL:

IN COMMEMORATION

of a Benefactor, the second of *February*, 1639.

By Ioseph May, *Master of Arts, and Pastour of that Parish.*

HEB. 13. 16.

To doe good, and to distribute forget not; for with such Sacrifices God is well p'eased.

LONDON,
Printed by *T. H.* for *Humphrey Robinson*, and are to be sold at the Signe of the three Pigeons in *Pauls* Church-yard, 1641.

BIBLIOTHECA

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TO HIS WORTHY FRIEND AND FRIENDLY Benefactor, Mr. *Richard Delamaine*, servant to his Majesty in the practice of the Mathematickes.

SIR,

THis new borne Babe seeketh admittance into your bosome, and that justly, because it is one of your own begetting: your Purse and my Pen have joyned for the production of this Issue; which now (as you see) hath taken footing to step abroad into the world. I for my part have designed it for the Sanctuary, there to hold a candle, that some dim-sighted-passengers might by its light finde out a way to the poor mans Box; and that by the same light I and my

fellow servants may behold what manner of man *Epaphras* was, for our paterne and imitation. I have sent it unto you without Bag or Scrip, very naked, yet in such garments as *Truth* useth to put on. You that love your Countrey so well, cannot chuse but make much of your owne childe, borne in your owne Parish, and one that doth so well resemble you. I have onely taught him his prayers, or rather I have learned from him how to pray; especially for you, that you may stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God: Which duty shall alwayes be really performed by

Yours truely obliged,

JOSEPH MAY.

To his beloved Parishioners of Saint AUSTEL.

BEloved Friends and Parishioners, it was for your sakes that I preached this Sermon, and you know by whose procurement: They are salutations which I presented unto you from a friend of yours, wherein you may perceive his love and zealous affection towards this place, the place of his birth and first breeding. It is my desire that among the many Sermons which I have delivered, some one may be more powerfull then the rest, to worke in you an imitation of our Benefactors good workes (the glory of God being his chiefe aime) and that it bee not raked in oblivion, or as a Candle put under a Bushell, when it was intended to give light to the

whole

whole house. I have been published what I formerly preached; you have the light both of the word of God, and the good workes of men, walke in the light of the one, by the light of the other, that yee may be the children of light, and so at length placed in glory (like starres in the firmament) with him who onely hath immortality, and dwelleth in that light which no man can approach unto: whereunto tendeth the labour and service of

Your friend and Minister,

JOSEPH MAY.

Col. 4. 12, 13.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers; that yee may stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. For I beare him record that he hath a great zeale for you, and them that are at Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

THE Saints and faithfull brethren which were at *Colosse* a city of Greece, converted to the faith of Jesus Christ, by the faithfull ministry of *Epaphras*, give occasion to our Apostle to rejoyce, beholding their order and stedfastnesse of faith in Christ upon the heare-say and report that came to him, and therefore made them a choice part of his Apostolicall charge, whereby to animate, and confirme them in the faith received: And however he had not seen them in the flesh yet his spirit and heart were with them; and this Epistle is sent unto them by *Tychicus* a faithfull Minister,

Col. 1. 5.

Col. 2. 1.

Col. 4. 7, 8, 9.

ster, and *Onesimus* a beloved brother; to the end that the state of the Apostle might be made known unto them [illegible] state made known unto him: Thereby to comfort their hearts, and to establish them in the truth; herein compendiously setting before them a platforme both for life and doctrine, that so every Saint and faithful brother might know what belonged to his severall vocation. And towards the end of his Epistle by way of consolation remembreth the salutation of others of the holy brotherhood and fellowship as well as of himselfe; as namely of *Marcus*, *Aristarcus*, *Justus*, *Epaphras*, &c. So that *Epaphras* here mentioned is one of the beloved brethren, and fellow servants, whose salutations to the Church that was at *Colosse*, to the Saints and brethren there, the Apostle remembreth in this Epistle; as in the text, *Epaphras* who is one of, &c.

In my judgement the Apostle is more zealous and affectionate in the salutations remembred from *Epaphras*, then from any other of the brethren: Because in the remembrance of the salutations of *Epaphras*, he so highly commendeth *Epaphras* for his love, especially toward the Colossians. This is observed by the severall commendations of others here mentioned compared with the commendations which are given of *Epaphras*, *Aristarcus*, *Marcus*, *Jesus*, which was

called *Justus*, they were his fellow-workers unto the Kingdome of God; *Luke* a beloved Physician, these are commended in briefe; but *Epaphras* hath a large commendation; two whole verses are spent to this purpose (enough to make a short epistle;) in the commendation of *Epaphras*, which the observations here following shall more plainely demonstrate, to the end that the worth of *Epaphras* for imitation may be had in everlasting remembrance. Wherefore observe (I beseech you) first, who is here commended; *Epaphras*; and in him the matter of his commendation; that is, why, and wherefore he is commended. Secondly, by whom hee is commended, and in him the manner of his commendation: I beare him record.

The person commended is called *Epaphras*, I suppose it to be his name taken in baptisme at his conversion from Paganisme to Christianity, which might be done at *Hierusalem* (where *Peter* baptized Phrygians and others) not without significancy, especially in that he was after his conversion deputed to a ministeriall calling: which calling requires that men be put in minde and remembrance of their duties by the ministry which was the practice of the Apostle toward *Timothy* and *Titus*. And of Saint *Peter* to the dispersed Brethren. And *Epaphras* properly signifieth an admonitor, or one that putteth in remembrance,

Nomen quasi notamen. etym.

Colosse a town of *Phrygia. Alst.* Ἐπαφρᾶς *vel* Ἐπαφρᾶς *ab* ἐπαφράζω *admonco & Ἐπαφρᾶς Euphoniæ gratia.*

2 Tim. 1. 6.
Tit. 3. 1.
1 Pet. 1. 12, 13
Col. 1. 7.

brance, and in this point he was for them a faithfull Minister of Christ, well brooking his name by his office: a fit name for a servant of Jesus Christ; so that it was comfortable to the Colossians to heare of *Epaphras*, and to have his name mentioned in the Epistle, whereby they received a testimony of his love toward them, requiting that testimony of their love in the Spirit, which was declared by *Epaphras* unto the Apostle. *Epaphras* in those dayes was glorious among the Saints on earth, but now is he glorious among the Saints in Heaven. And so in remembrance of the man wee come to the matter of his commendation; which is grounded on three severall foundations, as they lye in order of the Text. First, upon his love to his country, who is one of you, and for you. Secondly, upon his calling and office, a servant of Christ. Thirdly, upon his labour and exercise of prayer, not without respect to his calling, and love to his country; alwayes labouring for you fervently in prayers, &c.

Col. 1. 8.

In which holy exercise of his there offer themselves to be considered the subject matter of his prayer, and the severall circumstances thereof. The subject matter of his prayer is, that they may stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. The severall circumstances are these. First, the

painefulnesse of his exercise in prayer, expressed by labour and striving; yea, and that fervently: It was not faint and easie, cold and perfunctory, but hot and fervent with labour and strivings, for surely to labour fervently in prayer is a painefull and hot exercise; this is amplifyed by his zeale, for hee had a great zeale for them. Secondly, the continuance of his exercise in prayer; Alwayes, that is, constantly and continually, not intending every minute of every day, but exercise of prayer every day: As it was called a continuall burnt-offering which was offered but morning and evening every day, *Numb.* 28. 4. compared with verse 6. So they may be said to pray alwayes and continually, which morning and evening doe offer the spirituall sacrifice of prayer. Thirdly, the extent of his laborious prayers, which are made not onely for the *Colossians*, but also for them of *Laodicea* and *Hierapolis*, other congregations where *Epaphras* had bestowed his labours to plant the grace of God in truth. Thus much concerning the grounds of his commendation in generall. Now with your leave (and liking as I hope) I shall a little more discourse upon those grounds of the Apostles commendation of *Epaphras* in their order, whereof the first is the ground of his just commendation taken frō his love to his country, who is one of you,

labouring for you and hath a zeale for you, saith the Apostle.

Epaphras was a *Colossian*, their owne countryman and townseman, their countryman either by birth, or by education, or by habitation, in which severall senses one may be said to bee a countryman or townsman, as Christ was a Bethlemite, a Nazarite, and a Capernaite: *Lyra* saith perhaps he was a Gentile by Nation, and made *Pauls* Disciple; Without perhaps *Dionysius Carthusianus* saith, he was *natione Colossensis*, a countreyman of that place; this agreeth with the text, for he was one of them, *Marcus*, *Aristarcus*, and *Jesus* called *Justus*, they were Jewes, of the circumcision, *vers.* 11. but *Epaphras* was their owne countryman, and by that tye had a neerer relation unto them, which causeth him more fully to expresse his love and affection toward them. It was their glory that such a flower grew in their garden, as *Theophilact* noteth upon the place, much more for their consolation and comfort that they had such a faithfull Minister, and such a beloved brother.

Natus in Bethlehem, educatus in Nazareth, incola in Capernaum. Theophilact.

Forte erat Gentilis natione & de partibus Colossensium. Lyra in locum.

Dionysius Cart. in locum.

Nescio qua natale solum dulcedine cunctos
Ducit, & immemores non sinit esse sui.

He is unnaturall that hath no better affection to his native soyle then to a forraine country: By the rivers of *Babylon* we sate downe and wept when we remembred thee O Sion:

Psal. 137.

Sion: *Hierusalem* could not be forgotten, rather the right hand should forget her cunning, and the tongue cleave to the roofe of the mouth; whom nature hath joyned together, they cannot easily be put asunder. This made *Mordecai* and *Hester* to intercede for their Countrymen at *Ahasuerus* Court. As it was sayd of the couragious souldiers in *Hectors* army, Hester 4.

Eureliqui cives vestra virtute teguntur:

So it may be said of good men well affected to their Country, that the endeavour and care of one man doth many times deliver a whole city from disolation. Were the armed *Spartans* by *Agesilaus* accounted *Mœnia urbis*, wals of the city? Certainely good men are *Propugnacula ecclesiæ*, the defence of the Church; like the Tower of *David* builded for an armory, whereon hang a thousand Bucklers, all shields of mighty men. *Sodome* had beene delivered had there beene but a few righteous men in that place to have interceded for the rest, for good men borne and abiding in a towne or countrey, are termed *Auxiliatores ab ipsa natura suppeditati*, helps ordained by nature for that purpose; Therefore what some one may prize too much (as *Loto* Wife did her delightfull *Sodome*) one cannot choose but look back upon, to wit, his owne country; the sympathy of native affection is not easily wiped off, as Can. 4. 4. Plutarch.

it

Act. 7. 23. It appeareth by *Moses*, into whose heart it came to visit his brethren the Children of Israell, after 40. yeares spent in *Pharaohs* Court.

O patriæ natalis amor! Sic allicis omnes.
O quantum dulcoris habes!

Such was the love of *Epaphras* to the *Colossians* the first ground of his commendation.

The second ground of his worthy commendations is, that he was a servant of Christ, and so generally is every beleeving Christian, bought and redeemed from the bondage of sinne and Satan to serve and obey God in
Rom. 6. 18. righteousnesse and true holinesse; For such as are made free from sinne doe become the servants of God, and therefore being delivered from our enemies wee must serve him without feare in righteousnesse and holinesse all the dayes of our life, and hereby such as love the Lord Iesus in sincerity, are called
Esay 53. 11. and accounted (as our Saviour Christ was) his righteous servants, or rather by this service they have obtained a greater honour then to be called servants, for we are no more his
Rom. 12. 1. servants but his sonnes, *Gal.* 4. 7. Because we doe and performe that reasonable service which belongeth rather unto sons, then servants. Such servants were *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, *Job*, *Noah* and *Daniel*, and such are all those that desire to glorifie God by doing

his will with fervency of ſpirit ſerving the Lord. Theſe are they which are numbred of the Tribes of Iſreal, one hundred forty and four thouſands, and of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, a great multitude, which no man could number, and are called the ſervants of our God, who are ſaid to bee ſealed in their foreheads, in that they doe openly profeſſe Chriſt, and embrace the truth, and make profeſſion thereof with courage and conſtancy; making an open ſhew of their faith, becauſe the Name of the Lamb of God is written in their foreheads, in this number. *Epaphras* was a ſervant of Chriſt in the generall acception, and we which truely beleeve, & profeſſe Chriſt with him, are fellow-ſervants. Now there is alſo a ſervant of God or of Chriſt, ſpecially taken for one, that is a ſervant by an eſpeciall calling or function, wherein he is to doe God and Chriſt an eſpeciall ſervice: ſuch are they that ſerve faithfully in their miniſtery, being thereunto called, as *Barnabas* and *Saul*; and that is chiefly to ſhew unto men the way of ſalvation, ſo ratified by the Dumoſell, *Acts* 16. 17. Such ſervants were *Paul* and *Timothy*, and *Iames*, and *Peter*, and *Iude*: ſo ſtyling themſelves in the proemes of their ſeverall Epiſtles. And the office of theſe ſervants was principally (like *Peter* and *Iohn*) with boldneſſe to ſpeake the Word of God; God

Rom. 12. 11.

Revel. 7.

Revel. 14. 1.

Col. 1. 7.

Acts 13. 2.

Acts 4. 13.

may justly challenge service from all his creatures, because he hath formed them; from all good Christians, because he hath redeemed them; but from his Ministers principally, because he hath called them to be the chiefest of
Esai. 44. 21. servants in their holy function; he said to *Jacob*, thou art my servant, for I have formed thee; to
1 Cor. 6. ult. the Israel of God, thou art my servant, for I have redeemed thee; to the faithfull Minister, thou art my servant, for I have called thee, or appointed thee to be a chosen vessell to beare
Act. 19. 15. my Name before Gentiles and Kings, and the Children of Israel. These are shadowed by
Mat. 20. 1. the hired servants which labour in his Vineyard. In all these respects was *Epaphras* a servant of Christ, but especially in his ministry; his labours for the Colossians doe manifest his
Col. 1. 7. faithfull service, for he was a faithfull Minister of Christ for them. First, in that they had learned of him to know the grace of God in truth, having done his office faithfully in preaching the Gospell; a right Evangelicall Pro-
1 Cor. 14. 3. phet, speaking unto them to edifying, to exhortation and comfort, and labouring for them
In Text. by earnest and fervent prayer, which are the maine duties of a faithfull Pastor in relation to his flocke. When *Epaphras* was at Colosse, he was chiefly busied about Gods errand, delivering his mandates to the people. Now that he is at Rome he is busied about the Colossians

errand, to deliver petitions for them unto God. And this he doth with such earnestnesse, that (like *Iacob*) he is wrestling with the Angell, he will not be answered untill he receive a blessing. *Grandi arte capi Deus se patitur*, God is pleased so to be overcome, and no way else; for by this sacred force the violent take the Kingdome of God, and if importunity prevaile with the unrighteous, much more the righteous Iudge. Gen. 32. 26. Maldon. in Jo. Luke 18. 5.

The third ground of his deserved commendation is taken from the worke he undertooke and performed on the behalfe of his Countrymen the Colossians, his holy exercise of prayer; wherein to commend the worke I observed severall circumstances, and the subject matter of the same: the circumstances are already handled, though briefly, and therein I referre you to that which hath beene formerly delivered. The subject matter is now the thing which I intend to treat of, wherein is comprehended all necessaries to make perfect and compleat Christians. Hee prayeth for them that they may stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God; that is, (as I doe understand it) that they may be perfect and compleat in obedience to all the will of God. Obedience makes the soule of man Gods faithfull servant; nay it makes the soule the wife of its Saviour. It is divinely spoken of a morall

Æschyl. man, that said, *Obedientia est felicitatis mater, & servatrix Iovis nuncia*: That is, obedience is the mother of happinesse, and the wife of the
Gen. 22. 18. saving God. *Abraham* had the promise, *Quia obedisti voci meæ*, because thou hast obeyed my voyce; and for this grace hee had the honour to be called the Father of the Righteous: but our Saviour Christ did more by obedience for man, because by his obedience wee are made
Rom. 5. 19. righteous; and of him it is said that hee was *factus obediens*, as ordained of the Father for that purpose; and for this purpose also, that wee in him, and by him should learne obedience to all the will of God; and this was the *Summum bonum*, the desired happinesse which *Epaphras* prayeth for to betide the Colossians, that they might stand perfect and compleat in obedience to all the will of God. Hee will have them to be perfect and compleat; that is, to lacke nothing, to be absolute and entire to be all full, without the least defect, to have all excellency, even in the superlative degree, so that there should bee no want nor possibility of adding any thing; he prayeth for their Christian perfection, that they might be per-
Mat. 5. ult. fect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect: whereunto Christ exhorteth, and whereunto Christ propounded a paterne to all be-
Mat. 26. 39. leevers to be obedient to the will of God in all things; God is most absolutely perfect in

his Essence, in his Attributes, in his Workes. Of this perfection in God, Christian perfection commeth short, it is not so much as a point to that line, or as a drop to that Ocean; nevertheless it is accepted of God, and accounted a perfection: First, by comparing it to the conditions of the men in this world; and next, by their imitation and resemblance which they have of God and his Sonne Christ in the workes of holinesse; for such as labour for Christian perfection, they bewaile their own imperfections, and strive by holy desires and endeavours for a heavenly perfection, they exercise themselves in holy duties, are conversant with God in the inward man, and are heavenly minded, they are patient in adversity, forgiving injuries, praying for persecutors, and are ready upon occasion to helpe their greatest adversaries: they practise the rules of charity toward all men, exercising good workes, and carefully walking in their severall callings. After this manner, and in this measure a Christian perfection may be had, by the helpe and assistance of that grace which is sufficient for us. We have it in this life but in part, but when that which is perfect (indeed) is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. And we must have patience to awaite untill we arrive to that harbour, where the spirits of just men are made perfect, to bee

2 Cor. 12.9.

1 Cor. 13.10.

Heb. 12.

perfect indeed. Wherefore it becometh every good Christian to labour for such a perfection as may be had in this life, thereby to fit himself for realt and absolute perfection in the life to come. *Est aliquid prodire tenus.* It is availeable to doe our endeavours: one may be as *Noah* was, a perfect man in his generation; & the mandate to *Abraham* is to all the children of *Abraham*, *Walke before me and be thou perfect*: for not onely the man of God in his holy function, but also the servant of God in his holy conversation must bee perfect to every good work. And for that the chiefest grace and vertue of this life consisteth in love; the Apostle calleth love *vinculum perfectionis*, the bond of perfection. *Coloss.* 3. 14. And wise *Salomon* in the Canticles speaking mystically of the graces proper to the Church of Christ, saith, *una est columba mea, perfecta mea*, Which our translation rendreth, my Dove, mine undefiled is one, uniting love and perfection in every good Christian.

Gen. 6. 9.

Gen. 17. 1.

2 Tim. 3. 16.

Cant. 6. 8.

This perfection is first in the heart, there rooted, & thence spreadeth unto the tongue & the hands. It is first in the minde and the affection, and thence proceedeth into words and workes by a sanctified operation, for such a perfection is required. First, wee must serve God with a perfect heart, as the good King *Ezechiah* did, and as *David* commanded

2 King. 20. 3.

his

his ſonne *Solomon* to doe. And then with our tongues, if any man offend not in word, the ſame is a perfect man. And for our hands, they are to be made perfect unto every good work. By this meanes preſſing hard toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Ieſus. Let us therefore us many as bee perfect, and would be really perfect, bee thus minded. For this perfection and fulneſſe laboured *Epaphras* on the behalfe of his Countreymen the Coloſſians, in his prayers, and farther limits this perfection and fulneſſe with the will of God. For his labour for them in prayers is, that they may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God: where his will is to be underſtood, not for his Eſſentiall Attribute, which is the councell of his will, *Epheſ.* 1. 11. for that is hidden from us; nor for his will bringing to paſſe what he hath decreed, for ſo his judgements are unſearchable, and his wayes paſt finding out, *Rom.* 11. 33. And who hath reſiſted his will. So but for the object of his will, which is revealed and made manifeſt by the word taught and preached. This is the will of God required to be done of us, in which will we muſt ſhew our obedience. *In the volume of the booke* (ſaith *David*) *it is written that I delight to doe thy will, O my God!* which is Prophetically ſpoken of Chriſt, Allegorically of every good Chriſtian, whoſe duty

2. Chron. 28 9.

James 3 2.

Phil. 3. 14, 15.

Rom. 12. 2.

Voluntas. Volitio. Volitum.

Rom. 9. 19.

Pſal. 40. 7, 8.

2 Cor. 11. 1. duty it is to be a follower of Iesus Christ. For it is just and requisite for such as know the will of God, should approve the things that are more excellent, as instructed out of the volume of his booke. Why should we call him Lord and Master, if we doe not the things that hee saith? It is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdome of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, saith our Saviour Christ. It is required that we be transformed by the renewing of our mindes, that we may prove, and by our obedience approve, what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God. It must must be unto us as it was unto Christ, meat to doe the will of God, and to finish his worke, Iohn 4. 34. Mens thoughts ought especially to pitch on three things concerning the will of God: First, what he will doe with us. Secondly, what hee will doe for us: And thirdly, what hee will have us to doe. If we doe what hee will have us to doe, then will he make us vessels of mercie: this will he doe with us, and he will blesse us here and hereafter, this hee will doe for us. The summe of our obedience to the will of God in doing what he will have unto doe, is, First, to repent sincerely. Secondly, to believe in Christ constantly. Thirdly, to lead a holy life continually. It is the will of God that wee

Rom. 2. 18. Luke 6. 46. Mat. 7. 21.

Rom. 12. 2.

Acts 17. 10. John 3. 16. 1 Thess. 4. 3.

recover

recover our ſelves out of the ſnares of the Di- 2 Tim. 2. 26.
vell, and turne from ſinne unto God, and ſo
make our ſelves new creatures, that wee may
believe in Ieſus Chriſt, by faith appprehend-
ing him to bee our Prieſt to offer ſacrifice for
us; our Prophet to teach, and our King to rule
and governe us; and that we become holy, as 1 Pet. 1. 16.
he is holy, eſchewing evill and doing good,
ſeparating our ſelves from wickedneſſe, and
wicked company, dedicating our ſelves and
labours to God and godlineſſe, walking cir-
cumſpectly, ever learning and practiſing piety,
devotion, and heavenly mindedneſſe, clean-
ſing our ſelves from all filthineſſe of the fleſh
and ſpirit, and perfecting holineſſe in the feare
of God; forſaking our owne weake and cor- 2 Cor. 7. 1.
rupt wills, and applying our ſelves wholly to
the will of God, which calleth us to repen-
tance, and newneſſe of life. For if God bee
our Father, what Chriſt applied to the Scribes
and Phariſees to another purpoſe, is moſt true
of us, The workes of your Father yee will John 8. 44.
doe. To doe his workes, and obey his will,
confirmeth the ſpirituall kindred (farre more
noble and excellent then the carnall) betwixt
Chriſt and us: for whoſoever ſhall doe the Mat. 12. 50.
will of his father which is in heaven, he is his
brother, and ſiſter, and mother: and his mo- Luke 8. 21.
ther and brethren are thoſe which heare the
word of God, and doe it. Where the word

of God, and the will of God are one, and of one signification, that no man might bee to seeke where to learne, or how to know the will of God. There need no rules of Philosophy, no decrees of Popes, no traditions of the Church, for the salvation of mens soules, or the ordering of mens lives; the Scripture alone (which is a most absolute witnesse of Gods will) is sufficient to make the man of God perfect. There is the rule and Canon of obedience to the will of God; because all doctrines necessary thereunto, are in the Scriptures fully declared and expressed. For when *Moses* had told the people the words of the Lord, and had taken the Booke of the Covenant, and read it in the audience of the people, they said: All that the Lord hath said, we will doe, and be obedient, Exod. 24.7. And our Apostle thanketh God for the Romans, that they had obeyed from the heart that forme of doctrine which was delivered them, Rom. 6. 17. For to obey is better then sacrifice; because he that sacrificeth, doth but slay a beast, but he that obeyeth, doth slay himselfe in his owne corrupt will and naturally depraved affections. Now then *Epaphras* in the subject matter of his prayers for the Colossians, doth include the sum of all perfection necessary to Christians in this life, in that he praieth, that they may stand perfect and compleat in all the will of God.

Wilson.

2 Tim. 3. 16. 17.

1 Sam. 15. 22.

God. And here the Apoſtle doth not onely pray, that they may be perfect and compleat, &c. but alſo that they may ſtand perfect, &c. where the Metaphor in the phraſe of ſtanding, is not to be omitted; becauſe to ſtand in a matter, is to be conſtantly ſetled in the ſame, ſignifying to abide and continue in it, and not to be drawne away from that ſtation and poſture by any aſſault or temptation: as the Romans are ſaid to ſtand in grace, Rom. 5. 2. And as the Galatians were adviſed to ſtand faſt in their Chriſtian liberty, Gal. 5. 1. And the Epheſians are exhorted to take unto them the whole armour of God, that they may bee able to withſtand in the evill day; and having done all, to ſtand, Epheſ. 6. 13. For as the counſell of the Lord is ſaid to be ſure and immutable; ſo Heb. 6. 17. the Prophet David ſaith, It ſtandeth for ever. Pſalm. 33. 11. *Epaphras* prayeth not only for an *habendum*, but a *tenendum* to, that ſo the grace of obedience to all the will of God, may be theirs to have and to hold. And no marvell that *Epaphras* had ſuch a zeale for them; becauſe there was a poſſibility that they might be ſpoyled through Philoſophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Chriſt, which might bee feared; and therefore out of the earneſtneſſe of his zeale for them, he laboureth inſtantly with our Apoſtle to write this Epiſtle, and ſend faith- Col. 2. 8.

full messengers with the same, as *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*, that as they had received Christ by the ministery of *Epaphras*, so they might walke in him by the counsell and consolation of the Apostle. To this purpose his zeale is shewen for the Colossians, in that hee was very earnest and carefull for them, that they might continue in the doctrine by him taught and preached; whereby the foundations of Christianity layd, might not be throwa down or overturned. As there is a zeale of God for men expressed by the zeale of the Lord of Hosts for the remnant of Iudah, and those that remaine of Ierusalem, 2 King. 19. 30. 31. So there is a zeale of men for God, which was the zeale of *Elias*, being zealous for the Lord of Hosts, because the children of Israel had forsaken his covenant, broken downe his Altars, and killed the Prophets, 1 King. 19. 10. And there is againe a zeale of men for men: this was the zeale of *Epaphras* for the Colossians. The zeale of God for men is the abundant and earnest love of God for the good of his Church and his people. The zeale of men for God is the fervent and zealous love of men toward God for the advancement of his glory. The zeale of men for men is the hot and earnest affection that the Church and people of God have to doe good one to another. Zeale being still taken in the better part for true war-

Anxiè sollicitus. Pel. in loc.

rantab

tantable and religious zeale: for this zeale of men to men setteth forth the fruits of it selfe in mercy and compassion, in the desires of doing good to all men, especially to them of the houshold of faith; in the hatred of prophanenesse, and the furthering of Gods true worship and service, in wrastling against the corruptions of the world, ever hotly pursuing that grace of God which teacheth us to live godly, & righteously, & soberly in this present world. The zeale of men for men, is positive; of men for God, is comparative: but that of God for men, is superlative. This we may admire, the other two we must practise. To be zealous as *Epaphras* was; and withall, that our zeale be extensive, not unto one person, or one place onely, but unto many persons, and many places, even unto all the world, and all persons in the world. For looke how farre the commission from God extendeth to goe and teach; so farre it commandeth to extend the rayes of our love and affection; even to such as are of Colosse, Laodicea and Hierapolis, the Cities and places which had no long existence. For in *Nero's* time, (as Historians write) they all perished with an earth-quake. From such desolation the Lord deliver us. Nevertheless, the love of *Epaphras* toward them is here highly commended; and where-ever this Epistle shall be read, what this *Epaphras* hath done for the Co-

Gal. 6. 10.

Tit. 2. 12.

Mat. 28. 19.

1 Tim. 2. 4.

Strab. lib. 10.

lossians, shall be told for a memoriall of him. And so much for the person in my text commended, and the grounds of his commendation: It remaineth that I say somewhat of the person that commended him.

The person that commended him (as I have said before) was the Apostle Saint *Paul*, and the manner was by bearing record or giving testimony, of both which briefly and together. For the person commending, as he was
Acts 21. 39. not a Citizen of a meane City, so he was not a man of a meane quality, for he was a chosen
Acts 9 15. vessell unto the Lord, to beare his name before Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel; and by the Apostles, *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, he was appointed (I may say consecrated) the Apostle or Bishop of the Gentiles; he maketh no question but his testimony would bee accepted of the Churches as it was at Rome,
Rom. 10. 2. where he witnessed by his Epistle the zeale of
2 Cor. 8. 3. Israel, at Corinth, where he witnessed the contribution and liberality of the Macedonians,
Gal 4. 15. at Galatia, where hee witnessed the abundance of their love toward him; and here at Colosse where he witnesseth the zeale of *Epaphras* toward the Colossians. It was the happinesse of *Epaphras* to be limned by such a Pain-
Tul. de orat. ter. *Tully* the Oratour esteemed it sufficient that wise *Cato* approved him, though others condemned him. And *Pauls* testimony of *Epa-*

phras

phras was as much (if not more) as if all the other Apoſtles had borne record of his juſt commendations; for the Apoſtles judgement as in other matters, ſo alſo in this, was guided by the Spirit of God. Undoubtedly *Epaphras* had never obtained theſe commendations from Saint *Paul* unleſſe hee had duly deſerved them, and the cauſall particle doth enforce it, for I beare him record. Wherefore to be commended by him, was the greateſt honour the times could afford, and that was juſtly due unto *Epaphras*. *Paul* was another *Simmachus* *mirabili eloquio & ſapientia praditus*, wiſe and learned, *vir totus ex ſapientia & virtutibus factus*, full of grace and goodneſſe, which *Symmachus* ſaid of himſelfe, *mei moris eſt bene cognitis approbatiſque, ferre ſuffragium, nec perſonas hominum ſed vitæ meritu cogitare.* My manner is to approve ſuch as are well knowne, and well deſerving, not reſpect mens perſons, but to weigh and conſider the merit of their cauſes. There were but few to give ſuch teſtimony of *Epaphras*, and therefore for the future glory of *Epaphras*, the Apoſtle doth beare record, to make an everlaſting record of *Epaphras* his well deſerving. What was requiſite to a ſure teſtimony is found in the perſon of Saint *Paul*. Firſt, eminency in authority. Secondly, approbation of fidelity. Thirdly, exemplary integrity. All theſe were in him, for he

1 Cor. 7. 40.

Proſp. de ſym.

Boetius de eod.

he was conſpicuous and eminent in place and authority; one of an approved fidelity, and his life and converſation full of exemplary
2 Cor. 12. 11. integrity; for authority he was not one whit
1 Tim. 1, 12. behinde the chiefeſt Apoſtles; for fidelity, he was accounted faithfull, and ſo put into the miniſtery: For integrity, his converſion altered his converſation, his life made good his
Gal. 2, 20. doctrine, for Chriſt lived in him. The integrity of his converſation was approved by the viper that fell from his hand, from the courteous entertainement that hee received from *Iulius*,
Acts 27. & 28. whoſe defence and patronage ſaved him when the mutinous Souldiers would have killed him, and from *Publius* and the Barbarians that thought him to be a God. But above all, how did the Diſciples at Cæſarea witneſſe and approve the integrity of his life, when they not
Acts 21, 13. onely wept, but did even breake their hearts to forgoe him; ſo that it might be truely ſaid of this Apoſtle (in whom Chriſt lived) as it
Luke 23. 42. was ſaid of Chriſt himſelfe by the Centurion, certainely this was a righteous man. This was the applauſe and commendation which good
Cicc. 4. Tuſc. qu. men and wiſe men did ever ſtrive for. *Laudari a laudato*, to be well ſpoken of by them that were well ſpoken of; the approbation of one *Paul* was better then the praiſes of ten thouſand paraſites. This approbation had *Epaphras* from *Paul*; the Miniſter of the Coloſſians

from

from the Bishop of the Gentiles; and it were to be wished, that every Pastor set over the Congregations in the Church of England, had the like approbation from his Diocesan.

In the application of the Text give me leave to commend unto you an *Epaphras* now living, whom we of this place have found zealous for us, and of whom I now bear record; Let us examine how and in what measure hee may be paralleld to the *Epaphras* of St. *Paul*.

As *Epaphras* had a relation unto the Colossians, so this man to us. *Epaphras* saluteth them by *Paul*: Epistles; this man by his severall Epistles unto me for you, saluteth you. *Epaphras* was their Countrey-man, so this is ours. *Epaphras* was a servant of Christ, so is ours too; First, in the common and generall service of Christianity; Secondly, in the service of the Ministery in particular, though not by a speciall service and calling, to teach and preach the Gospel of Christ in his own person, yet *aliquo modo*, for that he procureth Sermons to be preached at his cost and expence, and this way doth exercise a ministeriall function, though not formally, yet efficiently, for the glory of God, and the good of this congregation. *Epaphras* prayed for them; this man is not behinde in the like holy exercise for us. Wherefore I desire your patience to heare some passages, word for word as they are delivered in his Salutations by

 seve-

severall Epistles; In one Epistle it is thus: I aim at those of my country by nearest relation, & them of the Parish and Towne wherein I was born. And again, I cannot do lesse then remember the place of my birth, and the poore that be in that towne; and I desire that my gift (viz. his benevolence and contribution) may stir up some to the like actions whilst they live, and not defer it till their death. And againe, I most humbly pray you (writing to me your Minister) to give unto your Parishioners foure Sermons in this yeare, and I pray God heartily that they may worke upon the hearers effectually, as they are by me intended for their good. And againe, I cease not to pray to God for the increase of your talent, and that your ministery may distill upon the hearts of your hearers, to guide some, and to direct, establish and comfort others to Gods glory, and your everlasting peace and happinesse. And againe, my prayer to God for you and yours, is, that hee will abundantly according to the riches of his grace, make your labours most profitable and glorious in your charge, and the high calling that God hath called you unto. And againe, I pray heartily unto God that I may bee what I am instructed in from men of your ranke and calling, who are the lights of the people, and the guides of soules, for whom my prayers to the God of Spirits (which is the quickning instrument)

strument) shall never cease to be poured forth, that every one of you may be as *Moses* & *Aaron* to go in & out before your people, and to speak a word in due season to those that hear you for their and your owne salvation. So to Gods gracious protection I commit you and them. And unto these his several prayers for me your minister, and you my Parishioners, his alms so liberally extended toward the poore of this place, and then tell me wherein he comes short of *Epaphras*. There is not a Sabbath in the yeare, wherein his hand is not extended to our poore, and at four festivals in the yeare plentitifully enlarged, not onely in Almes, but Sermons also, that so the whole congregation may be fed, some spiritually, and some corporally by his pious bounty. S. *Paul* did testifie that *Epaphras* had a great zeale for the Colossians his countrey-men, and it was so; and I (though inferiour to the Apostle, yet witnes the truth) doe testifie of our friend, benefactor and countreyman, that he hath a great zeal for you, and certainly it is so. Wherefore let us then in some thankfull way acknowledge the benefit of his love towards us, & make requitall as the Churches of Iudea did for S. *Paul*, even by the glorifying of God in him, and let us all in generall pray for him as our Apostle did for the household of *Onesipherus*; *The Lord give mercy unto his house, for he hath oft refreshed us.*

On the Feast of S. Luke, the Purification of the Virgin Mary, Ascension day, and S. James, on each day allowing 10. s. to the poore, and 10. s. for a Sermon.

Gal. 1. ult.

2 Tim. 1. 16.

However, if you for your part be negligent and backward, yet I for my part will say, and heartily pray, Peace be to him, and love, and faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. And grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Heb. 6. 23, 24.

FINIS.

Imprimatur.

Johannes Hansley.

May 29. 1641.